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Ministry of Advanced Education
Office of the Premier

PROVINCE INVESTS $7.5M TO EXPAND UBC MINING SCHOOL

VANCOUVER – The Province is providing $7.5 million to expand faculty and increase student spaces at the internationally renowned Norman B. Keevil Institute of Mining Engineering at the University of British Columbia, Premier Gordon Campbell announced today.

"British Columbia has the largest concentration of mining and related service companies in the world, and is a leading source of investment financing for the global mining industry," said Campbell. "The funding for this institute will help expand UBC's teaching and research capacity and ensure the long-term success of the mining industry and its contribution to the B.C. economy."

The Norman B. Keevil Institute of Mining Engineering is the only school of mining engineering and research in British Columbia. It has a world-class reputation for producing talented, versatile and dedicated graduates with the ability to address the multiple issues related to mining, including the development of resources to maintain B.C.'s position as a global mining leader.

"The expanded faculty at the Norman B. Keevil Institute of Mining Engineering will be a valuable source for the graduates we will need to meet the demands of the mining industry and B.C.'s booming economy," said Advanced Education Minister Murray Coell. "By investing in this institute, we are also enabling essential mining research to be conducted that will put B.C. on the map as a global mining centre."

The funding will add more than 80 new student spaces and three additional staff positions over the next five to seven years. The institute will develop students' technical, leadership, interpersonal and language skills, which are needed by the mining industry to enhance Vancouver's position as a world centre of mining expertise and technology. Teck Cominco has also committed $7.5 million in support of the Norman B. Keevil Institute of Mining Engineering.

"B.C.'s mineral exploration and mining industry has grown to record levels, as demonstrated by the record-high mineral exploration numbers reached in 2006," said Minister of State for Mining Kevin Krueger. "This funding will be instrumental in ensuring that the next generation has the skills they'll need to develop successful careers in this thriving industry, which is creating family-supporting jobs and helping us build strong, vibrant communities."

"This generous gift will allow UBC's Faculty of Applied Science to address critical issues faced by the modern mining sector, such as human resource development, community involvement, and safe and sustainable mining practices," said UBC president Stephen Toope. "The new institute will significantly enhance our programs in learning and research, and help meet the demand for skilled professionals in the industry."

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Investment in mineral exploration soared to $265 million, making 2006 the best year ever in B.C.'s mining history. B.C.'s forecast of solid mineral production continues to grow, reaching an estimated $6 billion for 2006, and B.C. is steadily gaining a greater share of exploration activity across Canada. British Columbia leads the world with its geological databases, leading-edge technologies and innovative service delivery such as Mineral Titles Online and MapPlace.ca.

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Note: The online version of this news release was amended May 18, 2007.

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